

Message Text

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DEPT PASS SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR US LE SY EG

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF LEBANESE SITUATION WITH FAHMY

REF: STATE 14282

SUMMARY: FAHMY BELIEVES US POSITION RE LEBANON IS GENERALLY CONSISTENT WITH THAT OF GOE. HE HAD REJECTED AL SYG RIAD'S CALL FOR URGENT ARAB SUMMIT ON GROUNDS NO ADEUQTE PREPARATION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO INSURE SUCH MEETING WILL SUCCEED. HE HAD SUGGESTED FRENCH BEST SUITED FOR A NEW PEACE INITIATIVE AND IS CURRENTLY AWAITING THEIR RESPONSE. GOE OPPOSES SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION AND HAS IN FACT SENT QUOTE SMALL NUMBER UNQUOTE FULLY EQUIPPED FATAH FIGHTERS FROM EGYPT, AT ARAFAT'S REQUEST TO BALANCE RECENT ADDITIONAL SA'IQA DEPLOYMENT. SAME TIME GOE HAS ADVISED SARG IT HAS NO OBJECTION TO SYRIAN POLITICAL EFFORTS TO RESOLVE CRISIS. NOTING KHADDAM AND ASSOCIATES HAVE TODAY GONE TO LEBANON, FAHMY OPINED SYRIANS, TOO, HAVE BECOME CONCERNED ABOUT PAST EXCESSIVE MILITARY INVOLVEMENT AND ARE RENEWING EFFORTS FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION. HE CITED LEBANESE AMBASSADOR'S CONTINUED INSISTENCE ON NO ARAB OR NON-ARAB INTERVENTION AND BELIEF THAT IMPROVEMENT IN SITUATION MAY SOON BE EXPECTED. FAHMY EXPRESSED GUARDED OPTIMISM THAT SUCH IMPROVE-

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MENT WILL BEFORE LONG MATERIALIZE. FINALLY, HE

WELCOMED CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH US ON LEBANON. END SUMMARY.

1. I HAD A TALK WITH FAHMY TODAY IN WHICH I AGAIN DISCUSSED LEBANESE SITUATION WITH HIM. I FOLLOWED LINES SET FORTH REFTEL, WHICH I WILL NOT REPEAT HERE. FAHMY EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR HAVING OUR VIEWS AND ENDORSED THE ACTIONS WE HAVE TAKEN VIS-A-VIS KARAME, THE ISRAELIS AND THE SYRIANS. HE AGREED THAT A FUNDAMENTAL REVERSAL OF THE CURRENT TREND IS NEEDED IN ORDER TO START MOVING TOWARD COMPROMISE AND CONCILIATION. HE THOUGHT ACTIONS WE HAVE TAKEN ARE CONSISTENT WITH POSITION GOE HAS ADOPTED AND ECHOED VIEW THAT OUR RECENT STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT OF OPPOSITION TO UNILATERAL ARAB OR NON-ARAB INTERFERENCE IN LEBANON PARALLELS STATEMENTS MADE BY SADAT, FAHMY HIMSELF, AND OTHER EGYPTIAN SPOKESMAN. HE THEN PROVIDED FOLLOWING EGYPTIAN ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT LEBANESE SITUATION.

2. HE HAS BEEN IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH LEBANESE AMBASSADOR SABRA, ARAFAT AND OTHER ARAB LEADERS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS. AS RECENTLY AS TWO DAYS AGO, SABRA HAD AGAIN STRESSED LEBANESE GOVT'S OPPOSITION TO ANY ARAB OR NON-ARAB INTERVENTION AND EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT, DESPITE RECENT DETERIORATION OF MILITARY SITUATION, THERE ARE SOME POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS. IN SABRA'S VIEW, WHICH FAHMY PROFESSES TO SHARE, WE SHOULD SEE IMPROVEMENT IN LEBANESE SITUATION BEFORE VERY LONG.

3. IN THIS CONNECTION, FAHMY REFERRED TO AL SYG MAHMUD RIAD'S CALL OF YESTERDAY FOR AN ARAB SUMMIT. AS HE, FAHMY, HAD PUBLICLY STATED, GOE DOES NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE SUCH A SUMMIT WOULD BE HELPFUL AT THIS TIME. FAHMY SAID HE HAD GIVEN THE PRESS HIS PUBLIC STATEMENT TO THAT EFFECT (SEPTEL) EVEN BEFORE SENDING IT TO MAHMUD RIAD. HE DID NOT SEE, FOR EXAMPLE, HOW ASAD AND SADAT, WHOSE DIFFERENCES OVER SINAI II REMAIN GREAT, COULD REACH A MEETING OF THE MINDS AT SUCH A SUMMIT. NOR WOULD THE PRESENCE OF
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QADHAAFI, WHO SUPPORTS THE REJECTIONIST FRONT, CONTRIBUTE TO MAKING SUCH AN ARAB SUMMIT CONSTRUCTIVE. ANY SUCH SUMMIT REQUIRES CAREFUL ADVANCE PREPARATION IF IT IS TO SUCCEED.

4. FAHMY RELATED THAT HE HAD ALSO DISCUSSED LEBANON WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR DE LEUSSE TWO DAYS AGO AND HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE FRENCH, BECAUSE OF

THEIR SPECIAL POSITION IN LEBANON, MIGHT BE BEST SUITED TO TAKE ANOTHER INITIATIVE. ALTHOUGH DE LEUSSE'S PERSONAL RESPONSE HAD BEEN THAT IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF SUCH AN INITIATIVE CAME THROUGH THE UN, FAHMY HAD URGED THAT GOE SUGGESTION BE CONVEYED TO SAUVAGNARGUES. DE LEUSSE HAD AGREED TO DO SO AND FAHMY IS NOW AWAITING A RESPONSE. (I DID NOT TELL HIM ABOUT OUR EXCHANGE WITH THE FRENCH ON THIS SUBJECT.) HE ALSO THOUGHT THAT SYG WALDHEIM STATEMENT SHOULD HAVE SOME SALUTARY AFFECT AND SPOKE OF A POSSIBLE WALDHEIM VISIT TO LEBANON.

5. SO FAR AS THE SYRIANS ARE CONCERNED, FAHMY STATED THAT GOE HAS NO RPT NO OBJECTION TO SYRIAN POLITICAL INITIATIVES TO TRY TO BRING ABOUT A SETTLEMENT. GOE DOES OPPOSE ANY SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH SYRIAN-SPONSORED SA'IQA. HE OPINED THAT THE SYRIANS HAD GOTTEN THEMSELVES OVERLY COMMITTED A MONTH OR MORE AGO, BUT HAD SUBSEQUENTLY BECOME CONCERNED THAT THEY MIGHT BE TOO DEEPLY INVOLVED. THEY HAD THEREFORE PULLED BACK A BIT UNTIL THREE DAYS AGO WHEN FOUR SA'IQA BATTALIONS HAD BEEN DISPATCHED TO LEBANON UNDR A SYRIAN COMMANDER. THEIR PURPOSE, AS FAHMY VIEWS IT, WAS TO STRENGTHEN LEFTWING MOSLEM AND EXTREMIST PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS IN LEBANON IN ORDER TO WEAKEN ARAFAT AND FATAH. AS A RESULT, AND IN RESPONSE TO ARAFAT'S APPEAL, GOE HAS SENT QUOTE A SMALL NUMBER UNQUOTE OF ULLY-EQUIPPED FATAH MILITARY ELEMENTS POSITIONED IN EGYPT TO LEBANON TO STRENGTHEN ARAFAT AND THE MODERATES. (HE CLAIMED THERE ARE 1,000 ARMED FATAH FORCES NOW IN EGYPT.)

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6. IN HIS VIEW, DESPITE DEPLOYMENT OF SA'IQA FORCES, SYRIANS ARE CURRENTLY WORKING WITH FRANGIYA AND KARAME FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. GOE HAS SENT WORD TO SYRIANS, QUOTE ON AT LEAST FOUR OCCASIONS, UNQUOTE THAT IT WELCOMES ANY SYRIAN POLITICAL INITIATIVES. AS I WAS WITH HIM, HE RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM KHADDAM, SHIHABI AND NAGI JAMIL HAD JUST BEEN SENT BY ASAD TO LEBANON. HE VIEWED THIS AS A NEW SYRIAN EFFORT TO WORK FOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. HE REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES HIS OPTIMISM THAT, ACCORDING TO EGYPTIAN ASSESSMENT, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO WORK OUT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT BEFORE LONG.

7. HE HAD NO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHAT ELSE MIGHT BE DONE, BUT UNDERTOOK TO LET US KNOW ANY

FURTHER IDEAS HE MAY HAVE. IN THE MEANTIME, HE
WELCOMES OUR WILLINGNESS TO MAINTAIN A DIALOGUE ON THE
LEBANESE PROBLEMS.
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